SUPA DUPA! magazine

a conversation with **bern**

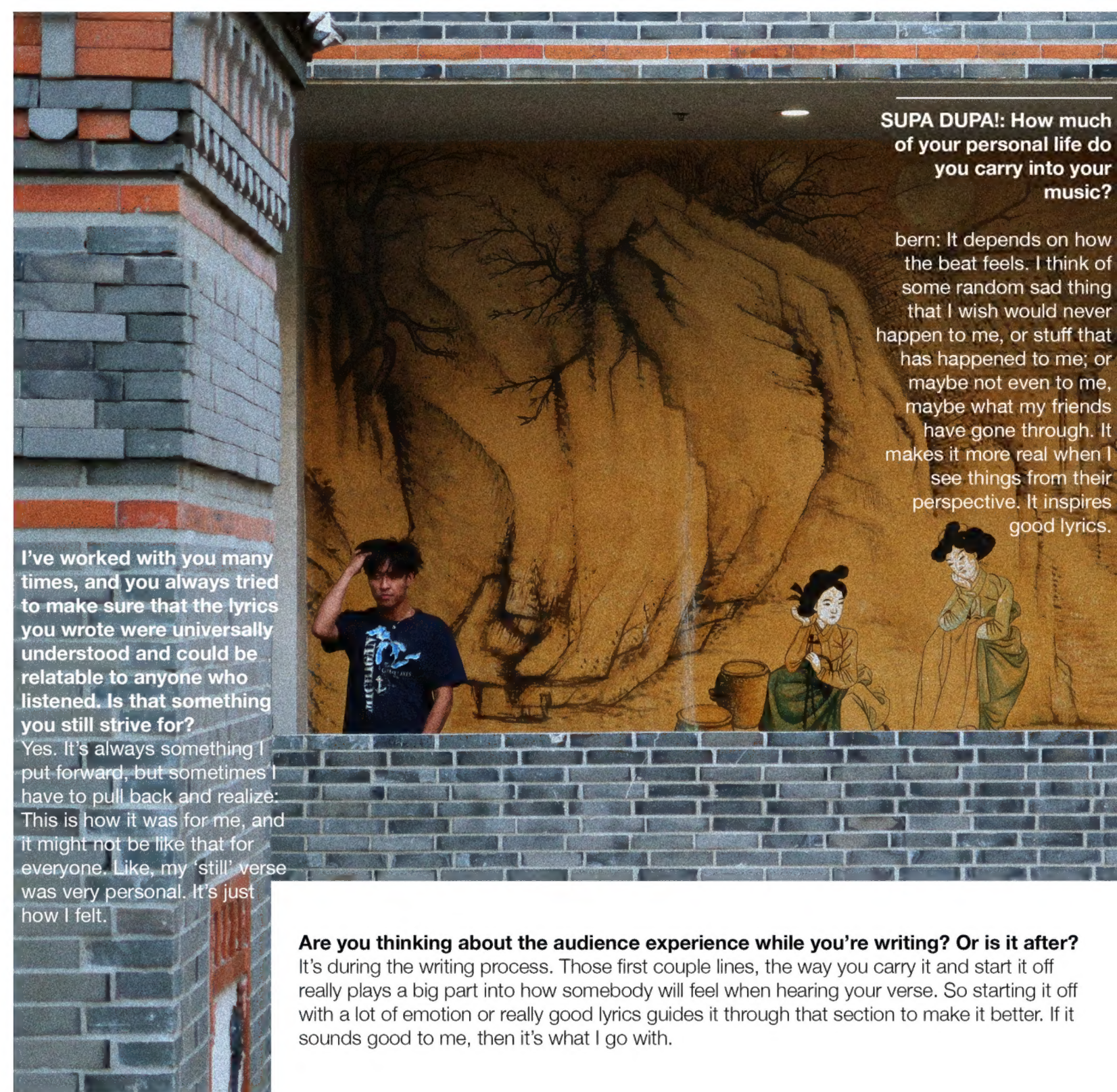## I DON'T WANNA EXPLAIN ANYTHING OR WHY I MAKE THINGS

I want people to care more about the music and not the content surrounding it.

bern's musical portfolio is seen in three different SUNSET PIRATES projects: 'with love', 'breeze', and 'last port'- with additional singles 'dntwnnaluv' and 'luvstuck!' he was the singer-songwriter for the duo.

now, a little over a year after their departure, he's navigating the life of a solo artist as he sets his gears towards an EP with his single, 'distance.' i invited him to my studio to share his new music, swap kits, and talk.

photography **josh r** styling **bern**

shot location: the wiltern, k-town los angeles

bern: It depends on how the beat feels. I think of some random sad thing that I wish would never happen to me, or stuff that has happened to me; or maybe not even to me, maybe what my friends have gone through. It makes it more real when I see things from their perspective. It inspires good lyrics.

I've worked with you many times, and you always tried to make sure that the lyrics you wrote were universally understood and could be relatable to anyone who listened. Is that something you still strive for?
Yes. It's always something I put forward, but sometimes I have to pull back and realize: This is how it was for me, and it might not be like that for everyone. Like, my 'still' verse was very personal. It's just how I felt.

Are you thinking about the audience experience while you're writing? Or is it after? It's during the writing process. Those first couple lines, the way you carry it and start it off really plays a big part into how somebody will feel when hearing your verse. So starting it off with a lot of emotion or really good lyrics guides it through that section to make it better. If it sounds good to me, then it's what I go with.

Taste. That's what makes an artist unique. Regarding taste: Who are you listening to? Shows? Books? I don't know what you're on. Anything. Shows.. A few episodes of 'Shameless.' I was watching 'Attack on Titan' a couple weeks ago, but I don't really have a lot of time to be watching anime right now. Songs, a lot of random artists. Minova, SAYAK DAS.. 'DID U RLY?' by them is really good.. 1pressy.. I don't know what it is with these bedroom pop artists, but these guys are really good.

You mention bedroom pop - Do you think it's easier to be on board with an artist when you know that they have a similar process to you when it comes to budget? Yeah. Also, their beats are exactly the way I like it, or the way that their vocal style is. The beats are good and their voice usually complements them well.

Is pairing your vocal style with the beats something you strive for? Yeah. That's what I try to get.

Right. So you recently dropped your first song as a solo act, 'distance.' How was that? Scary, rushed.. But, it's out. After a year of sitting and waiting. I've always liked that song, and it's always resonated strongly with me lyrically. The message makes sense. The context makes sense. The beat helps push it forward.

And you paired that with a video that you directed, which was a first for you. How was that? Did you have an initial vision? This song always felt like a 'city-type' song to me. But I felt like if it was a city, and I was all sad and dressed up, then it's just a boring setting. I thought that was too simple. So I was like, "What if I was sad on a hiking trail?" - Where everything around me is green, but I'm the one who's sad.

That's an interesting juxtaposition. I went for it.

It worked out. And that's why you wore black? Yeah.

shot location: h-mart on western ave, k-town los angeles

an improtu shopping trip:
what are the five things you always leave a shopping trip with?
1. honey
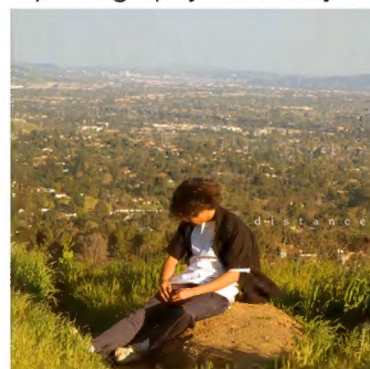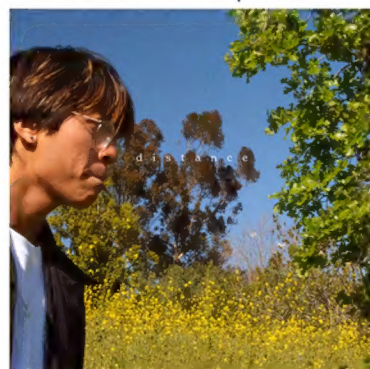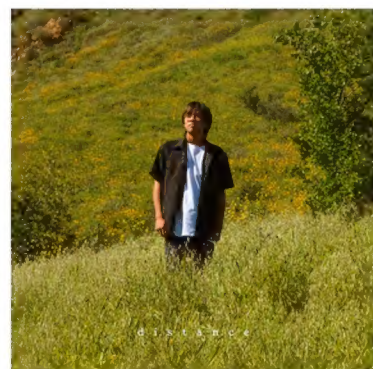2. yogurt
3. blueberries
4. cinnamon
5. yan yan

That's cool. What is it like releasing music as a solo act, rather than with a group? When releasing in a group, you're standing by someone. Releasing solo, it's really up to me. There's people that help, but how I carry myself, how I present myself.. That's all me. There's a small community of people who get me, and I'm grateful for that.

So 'distance' will be included in your upcoming EP if I'm right. What's it like working on this project? There have been a lot of ups and downs. I've had some really productive weeks, then the next week I'm incapable of putting my hands on it to push it forward. But it's always in the back of my mind.

Right. And what can we expect to hear? Is this something all new, or more familiar to people who know your style? It's for sure gonna be something new. I'm always trying to push for a new different style and sound, and I'm experimenting with my delivery. It's gonna be very angry and very sad, but hidden behind these lofi-type beats.

I can't wait for people to hear it. Me too.

'distance' cover photos

photography **mateo quiles**

I wanted to get your opinion on this new form of being an artist online, especially with TikTok. When you're a small artist on the internet and you want to 'make it,' it's kinda expected that you show this 'behind the scenes' aspect of yourself and your music for the sake of exposure. That's something I struggle with. I wouldn't say I'm a shy person, but putting something on display purely with the intent of getting views doesn't sit right with me. It's definitely not a bad thing to do, but I don't think I'm comfortable with it

Content vs. Art. I feel like we're kinda forced to be content creators these days. I think that we would rather make the art, share the art, then that's it. Yeah. I want the music to speak for itself. I don't wanna explain anything, or why I make things. I want people to care more about the music and not the content surrounding it.

It's an interesting case for sure. I don't see it going away any time soon, either. Which is the hard part, because with the internet, if you're not following the wave then you're bound to be out of the loop. I feel like you need to be taking note of what everyone's doing.

Definitely. It's quite the time to be an artist. With all this, though, we're at a point where it's easy to discover new artists because of TikTok or Spotify algorithms. I'm afraid of letting my passion lean more towards getting attention rather than the art.

Right. Though, for some small artists, you have to do that. Being attention-hungry isn't necessarily bad; but it can be depressing when you start amounting numbers to success.

It's hard to not care about those things when that's what makes you 'successful.'

Whenever I'm doing numbers, that's when people tend to compliment me. It shouldn't matter, but it does. SUNSET PIRATES was a good eye into how things could go.. We had these numbers, but at what cost? Our mentals were drained trying to get attention. It didn't feel the best at times.

What do you think your outlook on life will be in 3 months? Honestly, life has always been just a cycle. I'm experiencing the same things, but now that I'm older, I look at it differently. Everything comes with time. I used to want fame so bad, but now I don't think I'm ready for it. No matter how bad I want it. I wanna grow up like a regular person.

I think seeing so many young people in media getting success can be intimidating. I used to think it was a race, but now I would much rather work on something for a year or more to make it perfect to me rather than rush multiple things to try and get an experience. I'm sure I'll get that experience. I know who I am, and I know who you are. I don't see it not working out, and I don't see it failing. There's no way to fail if you're consistently trying. As long as you're trying, you'll get there, eventually.

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bern is @berniemapili on socials

'distance' is out now on every streaming platform

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with this magazine, we aim to show you something that you would never find through an algorithm. we have a strong emphasis on uniqueness, timelessness, and love. the link between art and its artist is a beautiful one; one that should be nurtured and talked about.